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consulting them on any matter requiring the exercise of reason."

The lecture on Germany is, of course, chiefly devoted to the career of John Sebastian Bach; and here we must take exception to what we conceive an unsound doctrine in art. With the opinion of any musician on the compositions of Bach, we have of course no right to interfere; but, regarding Mr. Hullah as an authority to whom the uninstructed may appeal for information, we are unwilling that they should in the slightest degree be led astray.

After stating his belief in the *humanizing* tendency of Fine Art, through means which "*of themselves give pleasure*," he says "This pleasure will vary in intensity according to the susceptibility of those to whom it is to be given; and this susceptibility, to whatever extent it may or may not be natural, is capable of great increase by cultivation. Now, it is notorious that the great mass of mankind do not put their susceptibilities under any sort of culture, in any systematic way, for any length of time; nor, in other words, do they accept Fine Art as a science, and study it, and deal with it accordingly." This we believe to be perfectly true; but when he proceeds to say, as a necessary consequence of this want of culture, that works are produced by poets, painters, and sculptors that cannot reach "the great mass of readers, spectators, or auditors," we imagined that the necessity of gradually educating themselves to the comprehension of these works was about to be urged upon them. To our surprise, however, this clear statement of the case is followed by a piece of special pleading on their own side. He says, "The question then is whether this great mass—the world at large, the uninitiated—are the more to blame for not appreciating such works of art, or the artists themselves for producing them. And the answer to this question is involved in that to another:—is any sacrifice of self-respect entailed on an artist by the endeavour to extend the sphere of his direct influence as largely as possible? or, to put it in another way, is pure and beautiful thought inconsistent with clear and beautiful expression?"

Certainly not, we reply; but "clear and beautiful expression" to the educated becomes very often a confused mass of unintelligible sound to the ignorant. The highest thought in all art requires the highest intellect to thoroughly appreciate it; and it is no valid argument that because the masses are comparatively uneducated, art must be manufactured to fit their requirements. The example of clear writing mentioned by Mr. Hullah—Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*, in the *Messiah*—appeals from the nature of the subject, as well as from the music, to the public at large; but can we not point to many of the finest choruses in *Israel in Egypt*, which are only now beginning to be at all understood by the uninitiated, a result chiefly effected by the persevering efforts of the Sacred Harmonic Society to place the Oratorio before the public, in spite of the apathy with which it was first received. Let us multiply examples, by mentioning Beethoven's *Fidelio*, which was at first actually condemned and laughed at; the same composer's Ninth Symphony, a philosophical poem only to be comprehended in all its beauty by many appeals to the ear, and scarcely coherent to the uneducated listener at first, although Mr. Hullah tells us that if a piece of music "be not—I do not say perfectly understood, but—to some extent felt, on a first hearing, there is little likelihood of its ever being understood or felt at all." Nay, we may take the

very composer who has elicited these remarks—Bach—and prove that day by day his works are obtaining admirers amongst the higher classes of amateurs, not as our author observes, because of their "interpretation by certain eminent performers," but because of their intrinsic merits, as the increasing sale of his compositions must sufficiently prove. We believe we may state as an axiom, that if the works of John Sebastian Bach—or those of an equivalent genius in any other art—convey the profoundest meaning to those who have trained themselves to appreciate it, the want of that training, and not the want of "clear and beautiful expression" in the artist, is the sole reason that others cannot share in the enjoyment.

In the fifth and sixth lectures, on England, Mr. Hullah does every justice to the many composers who, in very early times, really created a school before the influence of continental art became sensibly felt. We have not space to follow him in detail through his very interesting sketches of English musicians; but we may say that the remarks upon Henry Lawes might well be taken to heart by many composers whose words and music seem to have come together by accident. The specimen given, "While I listen to thy voice," is as happy an instance of sound following sense as could be selected in any language.

A great portion of the last lecture is devoted to the life of Handel; and much is said upon his readiness as a composer in all styles of music. To an English audience of course a criticism upon his Oratorios would be superfluous; and Mr. Hullah, therefore, judiciously confines himself to the records of his early career; remarking, however, that throughout his chequered life he was always "the same honest, truth-telling, God-fearing man, who so becomingly gave his later years to compositions (as he himself said) better suited to the decline of life, and which he hoped would "not merely entertain his hearers, but make them better!"

We cannot take leave of Mr. Hullah's interesting book without commending his selection of the specimens from various authors, many of which, as he says, are "new to all but the most enterprising of musical antiquaries." Such illustrations make the volume doubly valuable; and we have no doubt that it will have a ready sale, as it addresses itself not only to the cultivated amateur, but to that large section of the public which Mr. Hullah has already done so much to instruct.

THE HANDEL FESTIVAL.

THE selection on the middle day of this great Festival was one eminently calculated to show the extreme versatility of Handel's genius. The portions taken from *Saul*—an Oratorio most unaccountably neglected—contained some of the best specimens of the work. The opening chorus, "How excellent thy name," was sung throughout with an attention to the effects of light and shade scarcely to be expected from such an enormous body of voices; and the "Envy" Chorus—one of the most dramatic and powerful in the whole range of Handel's writings—produced an impression upon the audience so extraordinary as to make its immediate repetition a matter of imperative necessity. The "Carillon" Chorus was delivered with admirable precision, the characteristic instrumental accompaniments coming out with remarkable clearness. We must mention, too, as one of the great orchestral triumphs of the Festival, the execution of the Dead March, which was listened to with a reverential silence such as we scarcely remember, and which materially aided the awful sublimity of the composition. The one *solo* selected from this Oratorio was the prayer, "O Lord, whose mercies numberless," which was given by Madame Sainton-Dolby with a devotion of feeling thoroughly in accordance with the meaning of the words; indeed, we have seldom heard this beautiful composition so well sung, or produce such an effect upon the listeners.

The selection from *Samson* gave Mr. Santley an excellent opportunity of proving his many artistic qualities in the air, "How willing my paternal love," which he sang with much feeling; but the great success was reserved for Madlle. Patti, who gave the

celebrated "Let the bright Seraphim" so charmingly, that the audience was enraptured, and insisted upon an *encore*. Not only the beautiful fresh voice of Madlle. Patti, but the silvery tones of Mr. Harper's trumpet, penetrated every part of the vast area; and seemed, in this instance at least, to decide the question as to whether the Crystal Palace can be made available for solos as well as choruses. The two love songs—so full of passion, yet so widely differing in character—from *Acis and Galatea*, the one for the love-sick Acis, and the other for the monster Polypheme, were given by Mr. Sims Reeves and Mr. Santley to perfection. Nothing more delicate and refined than Mr. Reeves's singing of "Love in her eyes sits playing"—nothing more savage in its furious and unrestrained passion than Mr. Santley's delivery of "O ruddier than the cherry," has been heard for years. The Nightingale Chorus from *Solomon*, which was unanimously *encored*, the Coronation Anthem, "Zadok the Priest"—one of the four written for the coronation of George II.—and a selection from *Judas Maccabæus*, concluded this very excellent performance. No mention need be made of the noble manner in which Mr. Sims Reeves gave the energetic song, "Sound an alarm;" but it is due to Madlle. Patti to say that she gave the air, "From mighty kings," with an artistic finish that thoroughly satisfied every listener.

Nothing but unqualified praise can with justice be written upon the performance of the colossal choral Oratorio, *Israel in Egypt*, on the concluding day of the Festival. A "sensation"—to use a term which has been unduly perverted—so lasting in the memory as this work, thus nobly rendered, leaves upon the listener, is one more proof how the sublimest sacred music can elevate and refine the nature—lifting us awhile from earth, and bringing us one step nearer to the Creator whom we praise and glorify. Although, where everything was so finely rendered, any analysis of the performance becomes unnecessary, we cannot refrain from mentioning the Hailstone Chorus, the Choral Recitative, "He sent a thick darkness over the land," and "The horse and his rider," as marvels of choral execution. Indeed, whether it may be that more attention was paid to the rehearsal of these choruses for the Festival than has been bestowed upon them before, or that the singers were resolved to show how perfectly difficulties can be overcome, we cannot say; but certainly, with the infinitely smaller body of voices at Exeter Hall, we have never heard such remarkable precision in the performance of this Oratorio; and certainly never has the volume of tone produced by the choir appeared so perfectly under command. Although the *solos* in this Oratorio are of minor importance, Mr. Sims Reeves made his song, "The enemy said," tell so thoroughly with the audience that he was rewarded with an enthusiastic *encore*. "The Lord is a man of war" suffered materially from the very unsatisfactory singing of Herr Schmid, whose efficiency in this style of music should, we think, have been tested anywhere but at the Festival. The air, "Thou didst blow," was given with such graceful expression by Madlle. Patti, that the audience insisted on its repetition; and Madame Rudersdorff was eminently successful in the music of the Prophetess. The rest of the solos were effectively rendered by Madame Sainton-Dolby, Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, and Mr. Cummings. The National Anthem concluded—as it commenced—this memorable Festival; and Mr. Costa received, as he really deserved, the most enthusiastic applause for his unremitting exertions in promoting the success of this gigantic musical gathering. When we consider the number of circumstances which must combine to ensure the complete success of a Festival like the one just concluded, it must be obvious that the artists alone—energetically as they have worked in the cause—have not the sole weight and responsibility to endure. Many whose names have no place in the programme have laboured incessantly to promote that perfection of arrangement in other departments of the undertaking, of which the public sees only the result. In justice to the unwearied exertions of Mr. Bowley (the General Manager), therefore, we cannot refrain from bearing testimony to the zeal and ability he has displayed throughout the whole of this arduous enterprise; nor would our concluding remarks be complete were we not to add that Mr. Grove, the Secretary, has uniformly shown a courtesy and a readiness to give his services wherever they could be available in furtherance of the best interests of art and artists. The pecuniary results of the performance, although the Crystal Palace Company will receive the sum of £5,000, and the Sacred Harmonic Society £1,000, are, we hear, not sufficiently satisfactory to warrant a pledge to the public that the Festival shall be continued triennially. As a mere commercial speculation, it may easily be seen that an undertaking involving such an enormous amount of time and trouble, is scarcely worth perpetuating; but relying upon the artistic feeling always evinced by the Sacred Harmonic Society, we trust that some arrangement may be entered into with the Crystal Palace Company, by which the periodical recurrence of the Handel Festival may be confidently relied on.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.

MEYERBEER'S Opera *L'Africaine*, produced here on the 22nd ult., is one more proof how a senseless story must inevitably cripple the energies of a composer; and how much even the good material bestowed upon a bad *libretto* must suffer from the ill assorted union. Meyerbeer is so essentially dramatic in his operatic works—so rich in grand combinations of voices and massive instrumental effects—that much caution is necessary in the selection of a story, lest the several scenes required for the exhibition of this power should appear rather thrown in at random than evolved from the general design of the *libretto*. In the *Huguenots* and the *Prophète* this defect, if existing at all, is artfully enough concealed to prevent the feeling of utter want of coherence; but in *L'Africaine* the scenes are actually strung together so that any number might be cut out or added without in the slightest degree detracting from the entire

work. As a "sensation" drama it might thus be graphically described in the bills—"The Council Chamber—The Dungeon—The Ship—The Marriage—The Poison Tree;" five *tableaux* eminently calculated to fit the requirements of a modern dramatic author, but scarcely we think suited to create profound thought in the mind of a musical composer.

The Opera we regret to say commences with a short prelude, in place of an overture, the subject of which—reminding us too strongly of the Irish air "The minstrel boy"—is afterwards reproduced in the *septett* ending the second act. Much of the music in this council-chamber scene is exceedingly dramatic; and great opportunities are given to *Vasco* for displaying his high tenor notes; but there is little that lingers on the memory, if we except the catching, but somewhat common-place, chorus of priests. The working up of the finale to the act is however thoroughly in the spirit of the *Huguenot* music, but far inferior, from the want of interest in the themes. In this scene *Vasco* produces two slaves, *Selika* and *Nelusko*, whom he has purchased, before the Royal Council of Portugal, as proofs of a race existing in undiscovered lands, which he undertakes to make a voyage to, provided he is assisted by the Council. This is indignantly rejected; and he is thrown into a dungeon for his impley in indulging the idea that anything could exist unknown to the wise men of Portugal. In the second act *Selika*, who is of course in love with her master, is watching him whilst asleep in prison, which gives her an opportunity of singing one of the quaintest slumber-songs we ever heard, charming too in the treatment of the orchestral accompaniments, but somewhat patchy from the broken rhythms which Meyerbeer habitually indulges in. Then comes *Nelusko* to assassinate *Vasco* whilst asleep, because, as it appears, he is a Christian, but really, we presume, to remove a rival in his affections with *Selika*. In this attempt he is frustrated, as all stage assassins ever have been, and here occurs an excellent bass song "Figlia dei Rè," a real spontaneous piece of writing, admirably suited for Graziani's voice. This is followed by a duet—remarkable for originality of situation, if not for the music to which it is wedded—in which *Vasco* declares his passion for the slave, whilst lovingly bending over a "Map of the coast of Africa, from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Cape of Good Hope." Here *Selika's* geographical knowledge quite subdues *Vasco*, (who has up to this time been enamoured of *Inez*, betrothed to Don Pedro) a tenderness however of short duration, for when *Inez* enters the prison and announces that she has gained his liberty by bestowing her hand on Don Pedro, he turns right round to *Inez*, says it was all a mistake, and actually sells his two slaves to Don Pedro, who has got possession of *Vasco's* papers and plans, and intends to take the command of a ship and make all the projected discoveries himself. It would have been difficult for a greater man than Meyerbeer to make any music effective with such a tissue of improbabilities in the *libretto* to struggle against; but, besides the duet already mentioned, there is an excellent *septett* to finish the act, in which, as we have already said, the subject of the instrumental prelude is most effectively used. The next act occurs on board ship—the "big ship" about which all Paris was talking, and in the wreck of which we fear much money was sunk—and here occurs an extremely clever bass solo for *Nelusko*, in which he relates the legend of *Adamasto*, the King of the Seas. The subject is full of character; and the change of rhythm has here no effect of patchiness. The song was capitally given by Graziani, and narrowly escaped an *encore*. To the surprise of every one, *Vasco* now suddenly walks in, having chartered a ship of his own and pursued the same track; and then after a quarrel with Don Pedro, which ends in an order for his immediate execution, the ship is boarded by Indians, and everybody taken prisoner. The music of this act, though full of detached passages of beauty, is the weakest of all. Indeed, if we except the opening chorus of sailors, somewhat marred by the false intonation of the tenors, and the bass song for *Nelusko*, there is scarcely one piece of any prominence. The third and fourth acts take place in some unknown land which is alluded to throughout as "Indian," but who the fair-haired European-looking girls who dance before the Queen may be we are at a loss to understand. In the first scene a characteristic Indian march, and some *ballet* music are in Meyerbeer's best style; and the scenery and groupings are exceedingly well arranged. *Vasco* having now discovered that his slave *Selika* is Queen of the land in which he is a captive, immediately perceives that his passion for *Inez* was all a delusion, and transfers his love—which is always open to the highest bidder—in a duet, which makes us forget all about his faithlessness. Indeed Meyerbeer seems to have thrown all his power into this composition; and late as it came in the evening, it created a positive enthusiasm with the audience. The voice of *Inez* singing an "Adieu to the Tagus," somewhat disturbs our hero during the marriage ceremony; but he allows himself to be surrounded by "a rampart of gauze" to one of the most elegant choruses of female voices we ever listened to, not even forgetting the charming chorus of bathers in the *Huguenots*. The fifth act is ushered in by a prelude played on the violins (fourth string) violas and violoncellos *con sordini*, which called forth such a storm of applause, as to render a repetition of it unavoidable. The body of sound produced is certainly most effective; but the strain itself is scarcely sufficiently fascinating to warrant the applause with which it was greeted. The duet between the two *prime donne*, in which the Queen resolves to resign *Vasco* to *Inez*—for she has discovered that her fickle husband has once more returned to his early love—is ambitious, but scarcely of sufficient interest for its great length. Resolved to die, she sets the two lovers free. Don Pedro having been killed, in accordance with the law of the country, there is now no barrier to their union; and she expires under the poisonous tree, just as the signal gun announces the departure of *Vasco* with his beloved *Inez*, who it is hoped may keep an eye over him during the voyage to his happy home.